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Review of *The Search for a Common Language: Environmental Writing and Education* Edited by Melody Graulich and Paul Crumbley

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Others could point to a certain naiveté about solutions to problems and an overenthusiasm about organic agriculture and local food systems. But this is where visionaries make valuable contributions to change.

Jane Goodall provides in each chapter a concluding section called "What You Can Do" where she describes the steps each person can take at the local level to make a positive change. It is refreshing to read a message of hope and to find concrete things each of us can do in our own lives to make a difference. It is this optimism that permeates the book and makes it a valuable resource for concerned citizens. Perhaps most interesting of all is the origin of the author's own concerns from observing chimpanzees and extrapolating from their habitat and future plight to our own. Beyond alerting us to the vulnerabilities of living in a fragile and unpredictable environment, this useful book is a call to action by a scientist whose life and achievements demonstrate what can be done. **Charles A. Francis**, *Department of Agronomy and Horticulture, University of Nebraska–Lincoln*.

The Search for a Common Language: Environmental Writing and Education. Edited by Melody Graulich and Paul Crumbley. Logan: Utah State University Press, 2005. viii + 202 pp. Notes. \$17.95 paper.

This edited collection grew out of a symposium held at Utah State University in Logan in 2002. According to the editors, the symposium's purpose was to "publicly explore the particular ways environmental writing educates the public through a fusion of science and literary expression." *The Search for a Common Language* achieves that purpose by including short prose pieces—ranging from memoirs, essays on specific locations, and scientific papers—as well as poetry on natural themes. The range of topics and genres and the inclusion of poetry provide a variety of ways to talk about the environment and reach out to different audiences to educate them about the natural world.

Carolyn Tanner Irish's "Preliminary Reflections" and Helmut Grassl's discussion of science and public policy offer broad perspectives. Irish proposes that we cultivate both a sense of wonder at the natural world and a sense of judgment regarding the ways we are responsible for it. Grassl suggests that scientists need to do a better job engaging with the media and the political process, taking responsibility for educating the public. These themes of ethics and public education resonate in many of the other essays that focus on specific places and the lessons they

offer. From Jennifer Price's description of the restoration of the Los Angeles River, to Kent Ryden's reading of an abandoned New England farmscape, these writers find a common language by "reading" a local landscape as a text.

While many of the writers deal with the Southwest and the Rocky Mountains, some focus on the environment of the Great Plains. Dan Flores, for example, links the history of the Great Plains and the Rocky Mountains, arguing that together they form a "dream landscape" in American history. The Great Plains, Flores suggests, has been our great experiment in a massively altered landscape, and also the great experiment with privatization, whereas the Rocky Mountains serve as America's experiment with communal land. Flores believes a solution to current problems might be to emphasize our intrinsic love of life processes, what Edmund Wilson calls "biophilia."

This collection might serve as a supplement to a course in environmental studies, as the variety of texts opens up many avenues for discussion. The poems complement the essays thematically and serve as a reminder that aesthetic appeals are as important as scientific information to our conversations about the environment. **Denise Tillery**, *Department of English, University of Nevada, Las Vegas*.

This Land: A Guide to Central National Forests. By Robert H. Mohlenbrock. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006. xvi + 389 pp. Maps, color photographs, illustrations, index of plant names, general index. \$24.95 paper.

Robert Mohlenbrock's guide to the national forests of the central U.S. provides the traveling naturalist with a wealth of information on the wide array of national forest lands in the heart of the country. Part of a three-volume series of field guides, this volume covers the states of Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, South Dakota, Texas, and Wyoming. While most of the forests are along the western and eastern borders of the Great Plains, readers will find a detailed travelog for a National Forest within a day's drive of most areas within the region. While not the focus of this volume, a brief mention of the National Grasslands of the Great Plains would have made it more comprehensive for the traveling naturalist.

The book is organized by state and by forest, comprehensive in detail, but well indexed to assist the reader. From the swampland of Kisatchie National Forest in Louisiana to the spruce fir forests of Montana, Mohlenbrock